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ABSTRACT

The geolinguistic history of Norden (Scandinavia plus Finland) is reviewed. The shifting political boundaries, particularly of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, have contributed to a complex distribution of language populations that is all the more interesting given the common ancestry of most of the languages involved. The forces of nationalism have had to contend with the strong feelings of the inhabitants of large minority language enclaves, such as the Swedish speakers of Finland and the Frisian speakers of lower Denmark. The political role of these countries, and especially their role in modern European history vis-a-vis Germany, has exerted further pressures on minority language stability. The contemporary situation of the minorities is characterized by a variety of social patterns that reflect a complicated interplay of historical, geographical, economical, legal technical, and sociological factors. (JB)

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LANGUAGE, GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

THE CASE OF NORDEN

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LANGUAGE, GEOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF NORDEN

Thomas Lundén

In traditional descriptive geography, language is regarded as one spatial distribution as all others and treated as a distinctive feature, often unrelated to all other phenomena. It will be argued in this paper that linguistic distributions can only be analysed and explained in connection with the social, political and technological development of the territory in question. The test area for this argument is the Norden countries, i.e. Iceland, Norway, Denmark (including the Faroes) Sweden and Finland (including the Åland islands). In addition, the German part of Schleswig will also be discussed, as it is related historically to the development of the Danish state.

Norden may be regarded as a "security-community"[2], defined as an area whose inhabitants are unlikely to fight each other in warfare. Such a community reflects the relatively high level of interaction between individuals across state boundaries, eased by linguistic and cultural proximity. In aggregate, the states have very much in common, a fairly long tradition of stable democracy, problems of a harsh but reliable climate and nature, dependence on foreign markets and on foreign power. However, clear structural differences may be noted within the community. Both Sweden and Denmark are old colonial powers, having governed their northern neighbours and introduced laws, customs and linguistic forms which retain an influence within Norway, Iceland and Finland, all of which gained their independence only in this century. Also Russia and Germany have exercised a formal and functional influence on their smaller neighbours.

As a linguistic territory, Norden contains many types of conditions and relations, ranging from the dominance of accepted standard languages like Swedish and Danish to multi-faceted relations as between the dialects and the two written forms of Norwegian and the clear-cut but socially and territorially problematic distinction between Germanic and Finno-Ugric speech in eastern Norden. Danish and Swedish belong to the eastern branch of the Nordic languages, Norwegian, Faroese and Icelandic to the western one, although it is Norwegian, through its Danish influences, which has become the best medium of interaction between all Nordic language speakers. Finnish and Samic (Lappish), both belonging to the Finnish group of Finno-Ugric languages, are unrelated to Germanic speech. Finally, West Germanic German, Low German and Frisian are spoken in the border region of Germany and Denmark, Schleswig.[3]

The Nordic minorities comprise a varied pattern in their spatial distribution and physical environmental context. The Sami (Lapp) territories cover a vast area stretching along the Swedish Highland ranges from 61°N, into the Swedish woodland region and the Norwegian coastal area before arching into Northeast Finland. Here, nature offers a varied, but harsh ecosystem suited only for an extensive and differentiated land use; half-nomadic reindeer breeding with fishing and agriculture being the main pursuits. Even within their own areas the Sami today, being divided into distinct geolects, constitute a minority. Of an estimated total population of 35,000, some 20,000 Sami live in Norway, 10,000 in Sweden, 2,500 in Finland and 1,500 in the U.S.S.R.[4] The autochthonous Finns in Sweden (30 - 50,000) inhabit the western bank of the fertile agricultural

valley of the Torne River (Tornionjoki) and its tributaries, together with the meagre wooded areas around Gällivare.[5] The Swedish-speaking population of Finland (c. 300,000) lives in three coastal stretches. The first, in the north, forms a flat, agricultural strip along the shallow Bothnian Gulf. The second extends from the fertile coastal area around Turku/Åbo[6] and its associated archipelago, toward Helsinki/Helsingfors and eastward for a further seventy kilometres. The third area is composed of the autonomous Åland islands and the archipelago between Åland and Turku/Åbo.[7]

The Nynorsk (New Norwegian) standard written version of Norwegian is official in municipalities forming a distinct highland and fjord area in the southwestern 'bulk' of Norway, exclusive of the major coastal towns. As will be explained later, there is no simple relation between the two written standards and the spoken forms of Norwegian, and thus little reliable data on how many people choose Nynorsk as their written language. However, it is estimated that about half a million people currently use Nynorsk.[8]

Iceland (200,000) and the Faroes (40,000) both have homogeneous populations using the autochthonous languages, although there are still some Danish administrative personnel in the Faroes.

The Danish-German borderland is a wide isthmus with an undulating, fjord-like Baltic coastline, ideal for its main commercial ports (in contrast with the very flat North Sea coast) and a lowland with an associated chain of sandy islands. The German side of this coastal plain is the North Frisian area where, of the 40,000 Frisians, about a quarter speak North Frisian, which is in turn traditionally

divided into five rather distinct dialects.[9] In the remainder of Schleswig, there is a gradual but very complex shift from different sociolects of Low German and/or German speech and German sentiment in the south toward Danish speech and association in the north, the state boundary forming a 'fault line' of standard language influence. However, on both sides of the boundary are minorities of 20 - 40,000 people claiming affiliation with the neighbouring state's respective ethnic majorities. Even so, neither of these minority situations evinces a direct relation between ethnicity and speech.[10]

The sociopolitical development of Norden

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Norden's geopolitical situation was dependent on the nearness of the Great Powers and on the new technologies employed in nation-building. On Denmark's southern boundary, Prussia was emerging as the leader of a number of small states. Railway and canal developments served to open up the rich coal and iron areas of central Germany and had a massive impact on the northern, largely agricultural periphery, including the northern duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. These duchies, both members of the German Confederation, were formally owned by the King of Denmark and constituted a linguistic boundary region where Low German was at that time making inroads into previously dominant Danish and Frisian speech areas. High German influences grew stronger as a result of the increased commercial and transport contacts, but Denmark sought to counteract this pressure by integrating Schleswig into its kingdom and reducing its claim on the wholly Germanized Holstein. Prussian and Austrian opposition to this policy led to war which ended

in 1866 with the successful incorporation of Schleswig into the expanding Prussian state. There followed a period of rapid urbanization and of closer commercial and industrial integration into the German state. This modernization process not only threatened the Danish language (which was defended by several organizations), but also eventually threatened the viability of the non-written geolects and sociolects of Low German (spoken by several million people) and of North Frisian (with some 10,000 speakers).[11]

In the Danish possessions, Iceland and the Faroes, Danish was the only official language. In Iceland, the old written language, which had been rendered partially obsolete in the preceding decades, was resurrected as a literary language, whereas in the Faroes an orthography was invented in the same way as had been done in Norway. In both areas, however, these attempts were made at a time when many visitors predicted the death of these Norse languages, along the pattern established in the Shetlands and the Orkneys.[12]

Finland became a Grand Duchy under Russia in 1809 and retained the main characteristics of the former Swedish reign, including the official non-recognition of the 85 per cent Finnish-speaking majority, clustered mainly within the lower social strata. The capital was transferred from the partly Swedified town of Turku/Åbo with its native Finnish-speaking population to its present location at Helsinki/Helsingfors within the Swedish language area.[13] The Swedish language group covered all social classes, but was particularly dominant within the upper classes. Within a small group of intellectuals there arose a demand to pursue Finnish unilingual policies, but this was suppressed by the hierarchical regime in power. However, Finland achieved a

measure of regional autonomy within the more liberal political climate of the 1860's which was characterised by a period of elementary educational development and the introduction of municipal political activity. Both of these factors served to mobilize the language question as a central political issue. Clerical and agrarian leaders championed the Finnish-only movement, whilst Swedish-speaking intellectuals and liberal industrialists defended the bilingual option.

In 1886, the Russian Imperial authorities decided on a policy of official bilingualism, the majority language in each municipality becoming the local official language. High school education was to be in the dominant local language, which constituted a persistent threat to the upper-class Swedish-speaking minorities living outside the autochthonous Swedish area. Around the beginning of this century, State Agencies operating throughout the country were granted the freedom to choose their own working languages for administration. A period of Russification served to reconcile Swedish and Finnish nationalisms in order to promote the furtherance of the Finland fatherland. This was followed by a radical restructuring of the form of government from a four estate diet to a single chamber democratic parliament in 1907, when the two Swedish-dominated estates almost unanimously agreed to this reform, resulting in a reduction of the number of Swedish Members of Parliament to their proportion of the population, around twelve per cent. This political development was preceded by economic change. Helsingfors grew into the industrial town of Helsinki, generating a massive immigration of workers comprised mainly of former peasants and crofters from the Finnish-speaking areas.

In Sweden, the vast herding lands used by the Sami and gradually

claimed by the Crown were being lacerated through the intrusion of Swedish and Finlandic settlers. For their part, the Sami were accepted either as herders able to exercise their traditional land use and water rights[14] so long as they did not interfere with the spatially insignificant areas of settlement, or they were accepted as settlers. In many instances local courts were sympathetic to Sami land claims and allowed them to maintain their existing patterns of socio-economic behaviour. However, the development of the centralized state authority resulted in a policy of more permanent settlement patterns. In 1867 a formal settlement limit was established, partially preventing further inland colonization. This limit, however, was drawn almost at the ecological limit of colonization. Some of this area had, by the end of the century, experienced limited industrial penetration. Initially the vast but slow-growing forest was parcelled out to the settlers and farmers, who in turn often resold it to the sawmill companies. Eventually, the state realized its resource value, imposing restrictions on the herding of forest Sami. Railways were constructed in the area, its water power was harnessed for the needs of industrial southern Sweden and the first sprinkling of a tourist trade occurred. Each of these centralistic and large-scale influences posed a threat to the traditional Sami culture, but they also laid the foundation of local economies.

In the Finnish-speaking northeast of Sweden the new boundary with Finland/Russia meant that new parish centres and churches had to be built on the Swedish side of the Torne river, which previously had served to unite this fertile valley. For a long time the few signs of state power, essentially ecclesiastical affairs, were conducted in

Finnish. After 1870 Swedish was introduced in the schools and the churches largely 'at the request of the population'. This was the beginning of a rapid process of linguistic pressure. New mining and smelting techniques, together with the deeper penetration of the railway network, resulted in the exploitation of the rich ore field of Gällivare-Malmberget (a Swedish word, meaning 'Ore Mountain') and of Kiirunavaara (Swedified into Kiruna). Industrial and mineral activity necessitated the introduction of a proletarian work force of navvies, miners and officials into this harsh land populated by a thinly scattered distribution of Sami and Finns.[15] In spite of a considerable number of Finnish-speaking miners Swedish soon became the undisputed means of communication. In the Torne Valley, however, this did not happen 'by itself'. In the nationalistic climate at the turn of the century, the boundary situation was used by local Members of Parliament and state officials as a reason for material and cultural support in the area. The Germanization of Schleswig was used as a warning against the alleged spread of Finnish (and Russian) nationalism into Sweden and as a pretext for spreading Swedish nationalism into its Finnish-speaking population. By 1920, a complete de-Finnification of local and state administration, including all schools and libraries, had been achieved.[16]

Norway became separated from Denmark in 1814 and became united with Sweden in a double monarchy, whilst retaining a specific and very progressive form of government. The language of the upper classes and state bureaucrats was a spoken form of southeastern Norwegian very much accommodated to the Danish written language, and which became an established medium during the new regime. Despite this, a number of language reform movements were initiated. One, the Nynorsk movement,

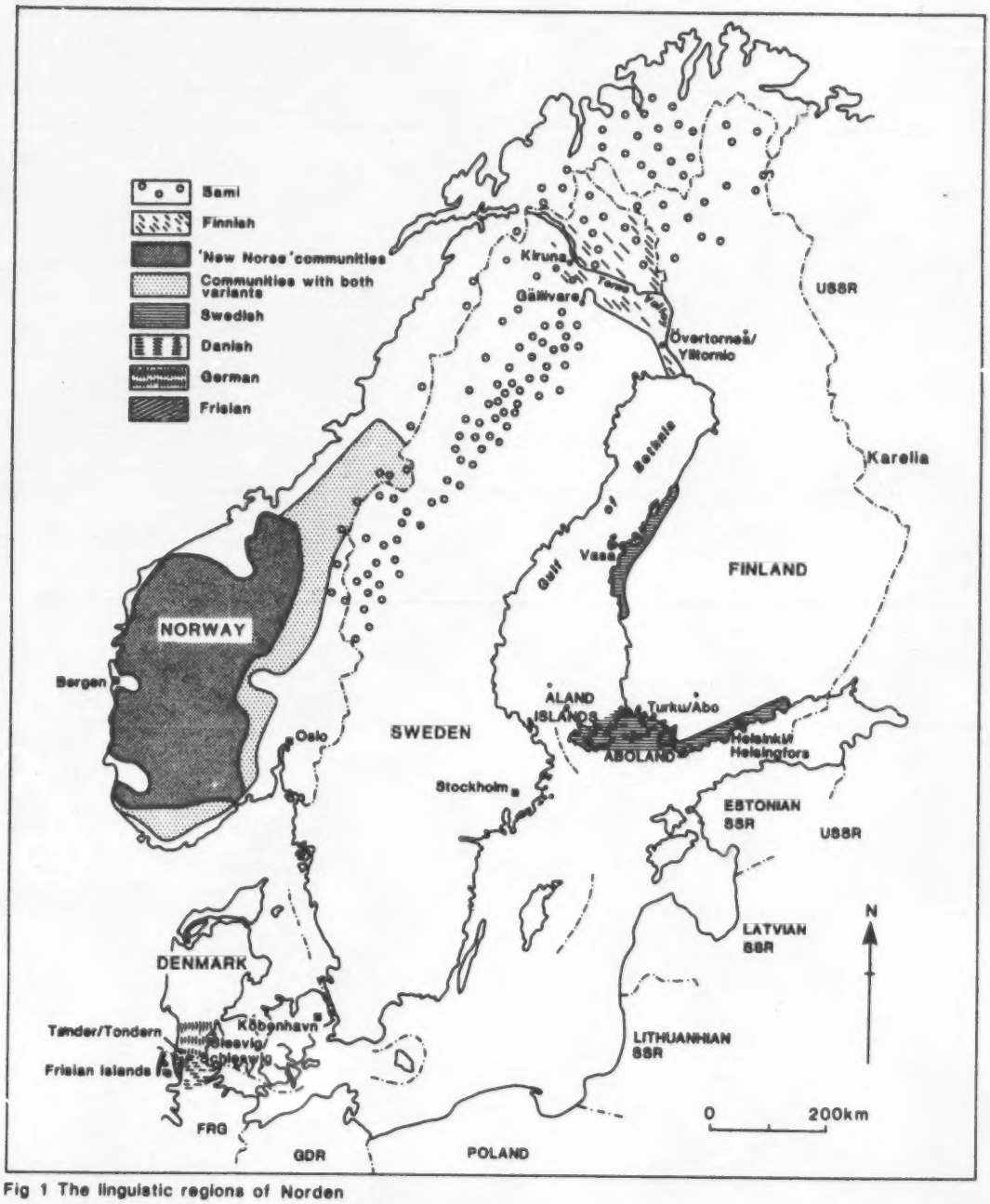

Fig 1 The linguistic regions of Norden

was an attempt to revive the old Norwegian language or, rather, recreate a new written standard by using the 'unspoilt' dialects of south western Norway. Different ways of creating a common language were tried, all based on purist and anti-urban sentiments. As a reaction to these attempts, the defenders of the Dano-Norwegian speech undertook to revise the written language in order to make it more congruent with contemporary oral usage in Norway. From the 1870's both groups became strong enough to make language a significant political issue; but, whereas there was a west - east spatial bias (the west and rural areas favouring Nynorsk, and the east and urban areas favouring a revised Dano-Norwegian, Bokmål), both forms were championed by the radical Left. In the 1880s schoolteachers were instructed to use the 'local educated speech' - but this only served to accentuate the problem of the language gap between spoken Norwegian and the still-official, written Dano-Norwegian. Soon, every municipality was given the right to decide on its own language preference which in turn inaugurated a period of language conversion into Nynorsk, and incidentally sharpened language tensions. Bokmål, which was reasonably adaptive to the needs of urban and south eastern Norway, became an officially reformed language, a reflection of Norway's emergent nationalism consequent to its separation from Sweden.[17] In northern Norway, a settlement policy was adopted which favoured Norwegian-speaking inhabitants. Place names and surnames were made Norwegian, and, in the pursuit of national unification, no consideration was taken of the fact that the 'local educated speech' insisted upon by school laws was Sami and not Norwegian.[18] This characterization can also be applied, in part, to the Swedish Sami policy of the same time, which was perhaps a little more paternalistic. As landowner, the Swedish State acted both as the protector of economic rights and as an advocate of

mining and water power exploitation.

Because of its national integration policies, pastures on Finnish territory were closed, initially to Norwegian Sami and subsequently to Swedish citizens also. The traditional migration of Swedish herds into Norwegian summer pasturages also became regulated after 1905. A further interference with the traditional, delicate human and natural ecology of the reindeer nomads was the establishment of mining settlements.[19]

Language and nationalism in independent Norden

Changes brought about by the First World War directly and indirectly altered the geopolitical situation of the Nordic linguistic groups. A national referendum was organized by the League of Nations to decide on the future of the Danish-German boundary area. As a result of a clear and predictable pattern of voting, a line was drawn north of Flensburg and the Island of Sylt, leaving the whole Frisian groups and some Danes in German territory. A somewhat larger minority of about 25,000 Germans was left in the territory returned to Denmark, forming local urban minorities of craftsmen and merchants and more sizeable agrarian majorities along the border. Long-standing commerical and administrative contacts within the now-partitioned Schleswig were terminated by the new boundary.[20] On the German side the minorities were almost forgotten, with the Frisians' claim to a distinct ethnic identity being denied by the influential German minority organizations and by German officialdom.[21]

In Denmark the international depression, shared by the whole of Norden, was aggravated by agricultural decline and by the imposition of

a new southern boundary. There occurred a progressive favouring of German nationalism which facilitated organizational work for 'German' landownership in agriculture. In spite of this, Danish sentiments were so overwhelmingly dominant, even in the last democratic elections of 1939, that Nazi Germany refrained from supporting local German claims for frontier revision, preferring instead a policy of 'Germanic Union of Nations' by recognizing an undiminished Danish territory.[21]

The end of World War II brought about another new situation. As the last territory under German rule, and being a rural area largely undisturbed by bombing and other war efforts, South Schleswig was chosen for the resettlement of thousands of refugees from what had become East Germany. This, and the radical change in both ideals and economic power, led to an enormous national political, and partly linguistic, re-orientation among the native South Schleswig population. Demands for frontier revision in favour of Danish annexation were now prominent. In the face of a negative British administration and a reluctant Danish government, the question was postponed until after the dispersal of the refugees to southern Germany and the emergence of the Bundesrepublik had reduced pro-Danish nationalism into a recognized minority's right to language and culture. The Frisians had long since been divided into a pro-Danish group, using a written standard of North Frisian, and a German group which conceived of the language merely as a 'respected dialect'. Facing the threat of linguistic extinction the groups adopted a compromise solution. Compared with the rapidly vanishing Low German

language, Frisian had shown a somewhat stronger resistance. This was probably due to the distinctiveness of Frisian culture and economy in contrast to the widespread and diversified dialects of Low German, which are often treated as a German 'patois'.[22]

In Finland, Russian suppression increased during the First World War, and many Finlanders actively supported Germany. When post-revolutionary Finland became an independent state in 1917, most of the Swedish-speaking officials joined the 'white' side in the subsequent civil war. After the 'white' victory a liberal regime took power, establishing a package of laws relating to official bilingualism and instituting municipal bilingualism wherever the minority exceeded ten per cent. In the Åland islands, the new republic was not regarded as the fatherland. Old ties with nearby Stockholm were revived whilst an unofficial referendum showed an almost unanimous support for their inclusion into Sweden. After Finnish-Swedish negotiations, the matter was brought to the International Court which favoured the more forceful demands of the young Finlandic state. The area was, however, given far-reaching autonomy, including a Swedish-only language legislation and an exemption from military service.[23]

Throughout the rest of Finland, legislation did not help to bring about peace in linguistic relations. Finnish territorial and linguistic nationalists heavily attacked remnants of Swedish over-representation in the administrative and educational institutions. This, of course, hit the position of Swedes in the capital, whose autochthonous Swedish population had been turned into a minority. They now lost even their majority occupational status amongst administrative officialdom,

partly through the optional Finnification of bi-lingual families.[24] After the Second World War, linguistic tensions were eased, partly because Swedish could no longer be regarded as a real threat to Finnish culture and partly because nationalistic aspirations had been muted by Soviet annexations. In the resettlement of refugee farmers from areas annexed by the U.S.S.R., lands in Swedish-speaking areas were exempted in order not to threaten their local culture and language. The Swedish-speaking Finlander is now well protected by law in all official administrative matters.

Sweden, Denmark and Norway remained neutral in the First World War. In northern Sweden, the policy of Swedification of the Finns continued, aided by reports about popular support. A few Finnish nationalists, urging the incorporation of northeastern Sweden and Soviet Karelia into a Greater Finland, stirred up a reaction of fear and hatred among the local population, eager to show their sentiments. Such claims were further exaggerated by the Swedish (partly Finnish-language) local press, almost creating a situation of mass hysteria. In the 1930s the government and some Stockholm newspapers pleaded for some recognition of the Finnish language, but this met with very heavy protests from local spokesmen, defending a 'Swedish-only' policy, while keeping Finnish as a 'natural' local dialect. The declining state of Finnish in northeastern Sweden was not really recognized until about 1960, when some small steps were taken towards an official recognition of Finnish at a time when the local speech was rapidly deteriorating, partly turning into a 'wild dialect'. Even local denunciation of official bilingualism withered.[25]

In the Samic areas, the exploitation of natural resources made reindeer breeding more difficult. On the Norwegian coast, industrial fishing eventually became a threat to the local mixed economy. In 1923 a Norwegian-Swedish agreement was reached which considerably curtailed the ancient rights of Swedish Sami to use Norwegian pasturages. Many families had to resettle in faraway pasturages. They were taken care of by the state, but naturally it was difficult for them to understand the geo-political situation which caused them to leave their old lands.[26]

The Norwegian 'schizoglossia' developed with language reforms intended to harmonize the two linguistic standards. This did not meet with complete success as it was opposed by ardent defenders of what they saw as pure, rural Norwegian, and equally ardent defenders of traditional Danish forms or southeastern upperclass speech. Politically, Nynorsk had its strongest support from amongst the religious, teetotaller farmers of Western Norway who favoured centre parties. Labour party affiliates, workers and peasants in the main, favoured a popularized standard language using elements from both norms. During and after the Second World War, Nynorsk was severely weakened by urbanization and by the growth of formal communication, especially the development of a popular press and mass advertising. Regional planning also became a threat as Nynorsk areas were increasingly integrated into municipalities and counties with Bokmål standards, notably in the Bergen area.[27]

Iceland, gaining functional independence in 1918, and the Faroes, practically autonomous since the Second World War, gradually ousted Danish as an administrative language, keeping it as their

main foreign language.[28] In both countries, especially in the Faroes, specialization and new technology implies a conscious planning of vocabulary tc keep alien influences in language at a tolerable level.[29]

Contemporary social and linguistic behaviour and the relations of Nordic minorities

In their daily behaviour, members of minorities react to stimuli created by the cultural and physical environment as portrayed above. Some of the Nordic groups have been well investigated, and as they represent very different cases of national and linguistic allegiance, some of these findings will be presented below.

The Germans in Denmark (like their Danish counterparts in Germany) diverge from other Nordic minorities because of the fact that their identity is defined more in terms of ethnic allegiance than in terms of linguistic behaviour. In this respect they form one extreme of an axis whose other extreme is the Finland Swedes, identifying with the country but diverging in speech.

Svalastoga and Wolf[30] present four 'musts' among the Danish majority in their behaviour in the ethnically mixed town of Tønder/Tondern:

- Danish must be used when talking to minority members
- children must be sent to Danish schools
- there must be no relations with associations or institutions of the minority
- land, particularly agricultural land, must not be sold to minority members.

Although there is no formal shibboleth of being 'German',

everyone in the area knows the nationality of his neighbours. Language is more a question of deliberate choice by the parents. When speaking to their children half the German families use High German, the other half speak a local Danish dialect. German has a stronger position as a church and school language, while all official matters on municipal and state levels are carried out in Danish. Consequently, all Germans are functionally bilingual, while about one third of Tønder Danes do not feel competent in German. In fact, Germans in Denmark are far more fluent in Danish than are most members of the Danish minority south of the boundary.[31]

In their social position, Germans and Danes do not differ remarkably but in Tønder top rank, two thirds of the Danes have administrative jobs, whereas the same is true for only one third of the top rank Germans, dominated by large landowners. This difference in functional association with the Danish state is found in the whole territory.[32] Social mobility also is different in Tønder, Danes being more upwardly mobile, while German women show a remarkable downward mobility. This may reflect the important fact that, in this case, national allegiance may also be the result of social mobility. Nothing is known about change of nationality, however.

As the target for mass communications, Schleswig is an interesting mixture of local and state-wide media. 'Ordinary newspapers' in both states inform about the local areas on an intimate level and about the state territory on a more general level, leaving a blank area across the boundary. The existence of (a) a German language, German-minded newspapers in Denmark, (b) the Danish-Danish "Flensborg Avis" issued in Flensburg, Germany, but spread

on both sides and (c) a German language, Danish-minded paper in Germany account for a rather intense coverage of news from all territorial and national sides. But these papers (with the exception of Flensburg Avis in Denmark) are clearly confined to readers belonging to the national minorities.[33] German television has a broad audience extending far up into Denmark, thanks to its many channels and expensive programmes. The effect of this is uncertain. However, the German language is no longer associated with the stereotype of a hated minority group, as once it was. The general picture of the German minority is of a group which identifies more with the local area, rather than with Germany, whereas the Danes represent all conditions from local allegiance to 'general Danishness'. This is reflected in migration patterns, selection of mass media, recreational patterns and in group perceptions. When asked to estimate the social distance from their own group, the most extreme 'Danish sentiment' group put local Danes closest to themselves (Score 0.14), followed closely by Copenhageners (0.26), followed at a distance by local Germans (0.88) and finally, almost considered together were Bavarians (1.57) and foreign guest workers (1.79). The most extreme 'German sentiment' group put local Germans (0.08) and local Danes (0.13) almost together, followed by Copenhageners (0.66) and Bavarians (0.92) with a pronounced social distance between them and foreign guest workers (2.13).[34]

Functionally integrated into Denmark, but emotionally attached still to Germany, the German minority's homeland is Schleswig. This territorial identification, which is very difficult to measure, is an important but little known part of the European minority dilemma and

deserves to be more widely studied.[35]

The autochthonous Finns in the Swedish part of the Torne Valley represent a very different group with a weak feeling of ethnicity and by definition, a strong but complicated relationship to their native language. A typical trait in their linguistic behaviour is diglossia, a functional differentiation in the collective use of the local Finnish dialect and of 'High Swedish', combined with an intermediary state of individual bilingualism in an historical transition process from Finnish to Swedish. This behaviour should be interpreted in the light of a century-old tradition of official 'Swedish-only' policy. Jaakola chose one central municipality, Övertorneå/Ylitornio, with an intermediate number of Finnish speakers (66% in 1957).[36] Test areas in the urban centres and in the peripheral villages were selected. The number of refusals was very high compared with an identical survey in the like-named neighbouring municipality in Finland, probably reflecting the delicacy of the issues raised by the survey and by the fact that it was a Finnish sociologist studying the language complex. Even people speaking Finnish more fluently than Swedish generally chose the Swedish questionnaire to complete. In terms of language ability, there is a clear spatial - hierarchic factor with Swedish dominating the linguistic character of the urban centres. This rural-urban continuum is paralleled in such spheres as education, occupation and recreation and is much stronger than any effects of distance from the river which forms the international boundary. At the individual level, there is a scale of intimacy ranging from the mother-child relationship and religious meetings in which the use of Finnish is dominant, to an intermediate position where, for example, both languages are used in everyday social contacts,

to the sphere of administrative officialdom where the use of Swedish is dominant. Even in the local social clubs and cultural associations Swedish is used habitually, except during the coffee breaks. After a long period of exclusion from use in schools and libraries, Finnish is now being introduced as an optional language. However, it is still mainly regarded as a useful foreign language of a neighbouring state.

Now these very marked situational differences in language use can be related to the structural environment. In the Swedish part of the Torne Valley, which is a depopulated area with a male surplus, marriages with Finnish women are both common and natural. This pattern of inter-national marriage has to some extent kept the language alive.[37] In the public sphere, there has been a lack of popular interest in promoting the language, in spite of the passive support given to the minority language by the central authorities. This can be explained by the massive indoctrination of the period 1870 - 1920's, and by the very weak possibilities for protest at that time. In contemporary democratic Sweden, 30,000 people in the Far North constitute too small a minority to enforce their claims. The irony is that were they to do so, they would probably get much better recognition of their claims. However, so far there has been negligible local support for such claims, not even a native protest.[38] Given a gloomy economic future, the Torne Valley seems to be heading for a continuation of depopulation patterns and linguistic assimilation in the eighties.

The Finland Swedes form another variant of linguistic and national allegiance. Under Swedish and Russian rule, Swedish was

the language of the upper classes, irrespective of their origin or location within Finland. In addition there were also 'Swedish' territorial enclaves which covered the whole spectrum of social strata. Those two different Swedish-speaking groups had little in common. Growing democracy and the simultaneous redistribution of population and occupations as a result of industrialization made non-territorially concentrated Swedish-speaking groups disappear. To-day the Swedish speakers do not differ markedly from Finns in terms of their occupational distribution patterns. As with all other declining minority groups their age structure is biased in favour of the elderly. In the light of this, the somewhat higher percentage of Swedes with a university education is more remarkable. Because of the language legislation, Swedes in the administration generally have to have a superior educational background, as almost all administrative areas are bilingual or monolingual Finnish.[39]

The former preponderance of Swedes in urban areas has now been reversed, mainly because of the growth of Helsinki and its related suburbs.[40] Urban Swedes are in constant daily contact with Finnish speech and its associated cultural symbols. The number of mixed-language marriages is now very high, around 45 per cent of all urban Swedes marrying Finnish women (in rural areas this figure declines to around 15 to 20 per cent).[41] Although Swedish has more status than its numerical strength would suggest, Finnish is chosen as a common medium in those socio-cultural environments where it is the local majority language. Among bilingual Swedes, Swedish or Finnish is used according to the demands of the speech situation, ranging from the home or school milieu,

where Swedish is predominant (with Finnish as an important subject). In 'high' culture, Swedish is also important but so is Finnish, and the individual is likely to choose to watch a play or opera in either language. Popular culture is bilingual, with Finnish dominating television and sports coverage. At the workplace, Finnish is the main language, except for those occupations, such as agriculture, fishing and forestry, which are territorially concentrated in the smaller Swedish communities. However, irrespective of their right to use Swedish, and of the right to be served in the native language, many Swedes use Finnish in their contacts with official agencies, mainly as a result of the ease and convenience of such language shifting to achieve a satisfactory answer.

In the daily life of Helsinki's Swedes, many of the language situations are readily predictable. For example, the percentage of Swedes who start a formal communication in Swedish ranges from an estimated 53 per cent in banks, 36 per cent in government offices, 23 per cent in shops and 16 per cent in taxis and buses. In most cases, a member of the minority knows from past experience which language to anticipate using. In other words, he has a linguistic mental map of the city. People also regard services in the native language as more or less important depending on their character; thus service in Swedish at hospitals is considered more important than a similar service in post offices and libraries. In everyday life convenience is the factor which most determines which language will be used, irrespective of the very strong legal provisions which stipulate under which conditions use of the minority tongue will be obligatory.

Helsinki Swedes do not form a readily identifiable group, either in terms of their settlement pattern or in their networks of social relationships. When asked about their opinion on which type of grouping characteristic they find most important, common language and common region come out fairly equal in their appraisal. Young people stress language more than middle-aged people do, and whilst this may in part reflect the Swedish school environment before the Finnification process of the labour market, it may also reflect the growing feeling of affiliation with other Swedish groups in Finland where the fragmentation of an homogenous Swedish culture has not gone so far as it has in the capital.[42] In the northern area of Österbotten, there is even a certain 'local Swedish nationalism', in spite of, or in fact because of, the rapid advances of Finnification in industry and administration, and of emigration to Sweden. Here, as in the Åland islands, the influence of television and radio emanating from Sweden is an important factor.[43] In general Swedes in Finland do not form an irredentist minority anxious to be incorporated into Sweden. With the partial exception of the Ålanders, Finland Swedes are a specific group of Finlanders serving as a cultural bridge between Finland and Sweden. Seen in a long perspective, however, this may be a step between former dominance and future 'disappearance or fight'.

Amongst the Swedish Sami population there is an important dividing line between reindeer-breeding families and other Sami. Reindeer breeding is in fact the only official recognition of the Sami's separate ethnicity, being the foundation of important and exclusive Sami rights. Relative to the ecological base and the number of reindeer per family, from an economic optimizing viewpoint the number

of herding families is far too high. This is especially true of the North, where economic, social and linguistic traditions have survived far longer than in the South. Recently the introduction of technical equipment such as snow-scooters and two-way radios ... has three clear implications for their group organization, namely:

(a) an increased efficiency of the herding operation,

(b) a reduction in the number of people required for such operations;

(c) a new dependency on the non-Samic, outside world.

In their attitude toward their situation, the reindeer breeders show a faith in co-existence with the Swedish majority, but a resentment towards the patriarchic state policies. In relation to education and modernization, they are willing to enter modern society, whilst at the same time maintaining their Sami culture. This is not to say that they do not recognise the inherent conflict between these two desires. With a diminishing number of reindeer breeders, Swedish Sami are rapidly losing their cultural and linguistic base. Equal rights to education involve a preparation for life outside Sami Ätnam, their native territory. Today, Stockholm has a larger number of Sami inhabitants than any other town. The same situation prevails amongst the Sami in Norway and Finland, although the Norwegian Sami have a wider occupational basis (in fishing and agriculture) which has led to a certain split in their ethnic-political cohesion. In the last few years, however, co-operation between the three Sami groups has proved rather successful with the establishment of a Nordic Sami Institute in Kautokeino, Norway, within the Samic core area. Samic claims have become more ardent, especially concerning the Crown Lands question, where the Swedish Sami are claiming their

traditional supremacy over their territories which were gradually expropriated by the state. Even if their case should ultimately fail, the old semi-colonial situation in the north of Norden is certainly on the wane. It is doubtful, though, whether this will help safeguard the Sami from total assimilation into their respective state systems.

Language and societal development

The history of languages in Norden may at first glance seem bewildering. Some small tongues like Faroese and Icelandic have developed into official languages, others such as Low German and Samic, have been severely eroded by modernization, whilst the relationship between socially prestigous languages and common vernaculars has almost been reversed, as in Schleswig or in Finland. In order to fully comprehend these developments it is essential that the 'natural' living conditions of the language groups be related to the socio-political geography of the area which they inhabit.

In common with all other areas of the world, Norden has experienced a process of specialization. Development must be seen in a literal sense: new, precisely delimited occupations have been unfolded upon society, which as a corollary has become more dependent upon communication between specialists. From the initial stages of food collection as hunters and gatherers, men have developed their spheres of specialization such that we have specialists in livestock management, in plant growth, producers of manufactured goods (industry), exchangers of goods and materials (commerce and transport), creators and directors (administration, education, art and communication). This development takes place in society and space. Areas and groups at different levels of development encroach one upon the other. Social groups become inter-related in new and diverse ways, involving among

other things linguistic and nationalistic rearrangements. Linguistic, in the sense that languages are differentially prepared for development, partly in their vocabulary and grammar, but mainly in their vernacular equipment (e.g. the immediate possibility of using technical devices for communicating in the language - and this with profit).[44] Nationalistic, in the sense that territories and groups have different possibilities of forming nation states, i.e. states comprising a people identifying itself with an area. In this respect the island territories of Norden have an advantage over other territorial groups such as the Sami.

A typical confrontation of different development occurred between the colonists and the Sami. Because of different kinds of land use, colonists could invade the pasturage areas without any immediate dangerous repercussions on Sami life. As the economy developed, the Sami were gradually marginalized. This refers also to their language, which is very well suited to the local ecology, but like all other languges, not directly applicable for use in the new technical life. In fact the total number of Sami is insufficient to necessitate a technical vocabulary in Sami speech, let alone the problem of the low intelligibility between the various Sami dialects (or geolects).

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the language of administration and the language of the people could exist in parallel because of the small amount of interchange between them. Sweden rapidly changed the official language of former Danish-Norwegian areas annexed in 1658, and Russia persisted in using Swedish in Finland even in areas where the peasantry could not understand it.[45] With the transformation of the agricultural sector, (now run according to the principles of capitalism), and with industrialization, both education and communication became

increasingly necessary. The development of a rail and telegraph network made nationbuilding a planning goal.[46] All over Norden, the question of language was raised - not by the people but by the intelligentsia, often speaking the old official language better than their conservative opponents. Danish eventually lost its formal status in three territories, Swedish in one territory. At the same time, a change took place from a fairly homogenous settlement and linkage pattern of self-sufficient agriculture into patterns of rural-urban interdependence. This greatly influenced the language boundaries. Commerical contacts were now formalized, exclusively in the language of the town. Consequently even rural schools and municipalities had to accommodate. With the presence of an active official interest, the situation became even more acute, as in northern Sweden and Prussian Schleswig, where the urban areas acted as the spearheads of official language penetration into the surrounding rural areas. Extra stress in this new pattern of linguistic contact was occasioned by the differences in the ecological bases for development. Some of the minority language areas were suited to the demands of new technology, others were not. In Finland for example. the southern mainland area was an ideal landscape for the development of railways, ports, and water-powered industry, whereas the adjoining archipelago was unsuited both for this and for other new specialized occupations demanded by a technological society.[47] For the Swedish Finlanders, this meant that part of their territory developed faster than they could manage to control because they were such a small group, whilst in the archipelago the Swedish culture and language survived until the last inhabitant left.

The contemporary situation

Modern society depends on world-wide relations and communications. Despite this, most people identify more with their national society i.e. they are more influenced by intra-state information than ever before. The local and regional levels have declined in importance, so that most intra-state communication normally reaches the citizen through mediation in his capital city. There is a spatial pattern partly resembling the hierarchy of central-place theory.[49] Finnish-speaking villages in the Swedish Torne Valley are related to bilingual local towns, which in turn form the link to the outside world. Urban areas thus tend to form the 'holes in the Swiss cheese' of minority speech. At each step in the hierarchy there is a set of technical devices at an economical population range. Television and broadcasting stations, dailies, weeklies, libraries, books and opera houses have typical threshold levels, working in favour of large, and spatially concentrated, consumer groups.

The principle of a central place hierarchic pattern is paralleled at the occupational level also, reflecting further development in specialization in large cities. In order to survive as a territorial entity, minorities must fulfil the occupational requirements of the area. This implies a very delicate balance between the supply of occupational skills and the demand from the people. Applicants must be occupationally appropriate as well as ethnically acceptable. In most modern, democratic Western-type states, this form of occupational and territorial planning does not seem feasible. Large industrial concerns, when located within minority areas, necessitate an influx of alien personnel. This has happened in the past in the Swedish iron ore and water-power producing districts. Today in Finland, pulp mill and nuclear power stations are being located in the

Swedish language coastal area, with the immediate consequence of substantial alien immigration. Similarily Norway's high technology aluminium plants are situated in the traditional West Norwegian dialect areas. In the Frisian and Danish areas of Germany, tourism has developed substantially and with its seasonal labour demand most of the personnel have to be imported from distant regions. Another example could be given at the community level. Consider the needs of the Faroesian population for eye care: with a threshold level equalling the actual number of inhabitants, the only ophthalmologist capable of being sustained on the Faroes represents a small scale example of the individual occupation-language matching process. Will it be possible to foresee the future need for his successor in order to prepare for the medical education of a Faroese student?[50]

The Åland islands offer a good example of the beginning of an 'alienation' process which is occurring at both the upper and lower levels of the occupational strata. As a result of the flourishing shipping and tourist industries, owned and managed by local concerns, well-paid jobs are available to Ålanders with little formal education, who can now afford to refuse the low-paid seasonal jobs in tourism. The vacancies are filled by unilingual Finns from the mainland. Key administrative positions for which knowledge of Finnish is expected, although not necessary, are often taken up by mainland Swedish Finlanders. To the linguistically-sensitive Ålanders this combination suggests a future similar to that of the rest of Swedish Finland, that is, a gradual accommodation in which Swedish is officially recognized, but where all economic and social contacts work in favour of the majority language of the state.[51]

Concluding observations

The total social situation of Nordic minorities can be portrayed from a number of different viewpoints:

'History', conceived as transmitting previous occurrences, is only of importance insofar as it is used as a basis for present thoughts and actions. Present day attitudes of Finns and Swedes in both countries towards Finnish Swedes and Swedish Finns often reflect the minorities' former social position, much to the detriment of the minorities. This difference between actual circumstances and 'lessons from History' is still more conspicuous in Schleswig.

Geography. The actual location of minority groups is of interest only if related to other spatial distributions. The attractiveness of the Frisian sandy islands can only be understood against the background of Germany's massive population and limited coastal area. The Sami problem is partly a geopolitical one of a territorial partition between all four big powers in the region, each with a very distant core region and capital which directs and steers events in the Sami periphery of the country.

Economy. The local base for economic development is one of the main determinants of the social position of minority peoples. A strong economic base is not necessarily the best guarantee for protection, however, as it may lead to an influx of socially or economically stronger population groups.

Politics and Law. 'Law' is more a confirmation of social norms than a prescription for behaviour. Similarily, the territorial and hierarchical division of politics are more a reflection of situations that have occurred than of democratic decisions. The Swedes in Finland are well protected by

law, but should Helsinki's Swedes insist on the full implementation of what the law prescribes, then surely the laws would be revised and their rights restricted. Likewise, the implementation of official language rights by the Swedish Finns would in all probability not be fully realized by that group given their current socio-behavioural circumstances. Laws and state territories do, however, have important effects upon minorities even if their role has been overexaggerated when compared with other factors such as economic and technological considerations.

Technology. New technology is often the precursor of social change. Almost every innovation has changed the relationships between ethnic and linguistic groups. The intricate balance between ecology and communal economy in pre-industrial times was gradually disturbed by the introduction of new methods involving the expansion of communication networks within which nearly everybody was forced to participate.

Sociology. The total outcome of group relations is thus determined by a host of factors. Without being too deterministic, it must be said that the spatial economy of minority group areas has been overlooked as an explanatory factor. Minorities are not protected by good laws, but through a conscious process of planning for jobs, infrastructure, land use and education, carried out by the minority group itself, in order to preserve its territory and language. This is certainly not an easy task. There is, in fact, an inherent conflict between the concept of an ethnic group with strong inter-relationships and the concept of parliamentary democracy, based upon the will of the political majorities within delimited territories.[52] Without denying the overwhelmingly positive effects of democracy in Norden, it must be said that minorities are now in a less favourable situation - as minorities - than they were before the Industrial Revolution.

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This paper is mainly based upon works of Nordic Social Scientists, Geographers and Linguists. Where possible, reference has been made to English or German language works which provide reference to original works in the Nordic languages. I am very grateful for the generous advice and assistance given by Dr. Colin H. Williams, North Staffordshire Polytechnic and by Fil. Kand. Eric Clark of the Department of Human Geography, The University of Stockholm.

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